

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 CIAE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8706

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 1129

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, YO

SUBJECT: TITO'S HEALTH

REF: BELGRADE 1105

1. SWISS AMBASSADOR KELLER GAVE DCM FULL RUNDOWN ON HIS MARCH 11 PRIVATE LUNCHEON WITH TITO AT HIS HUNTING LODGE AT KARADJORJEVO. HE SAID HE FOUND TITO HEARTY AND IN FINE SPIRITS.

2. VISIT WAS ARRANGED SUDDENLY IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO KELLER'S DEPARTURE FROM HIS POST AFTER SEVEN YEARS. KELLER WAS TOLD LUNCHEON WAS ARRANGED FOR HIM PERSONALLY AS SWISS AMBASSADOR, IN LIGHT OF HIS LONG CONTRIBUTION TO EXCELLENT SWISS-YUGOSLAV RELATIONS, RATHER THAN FOR HIM IN HIS CAPACITY AS DOYEN. HE ARRIVED AT KARADJORDJEVO AT 11:00 IN THE MORNING, AND IMMEDIATELY HE AND TITO AND MRS. KELLER AND JOVANKA TOOK HOUR-LONG STROLL THROUGH WOODS. TITO TOOK FIRM STEPS WITHOUT FALTERING ONCE. IN BEST OF SPIRITS, HE ENJOYED SHOWING KELLERS MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF WILD-LIFE WHICH INHABIT HIS WOODS. UPON CONCLUSION OF WALK THE TWO

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COUPLES ENTERED SMALL HUNTING PAVILION WHERE THEY WERE SERVED LIGHT

REFRESHMENTS (FOOD AND DRINK). TITO TOOK 2 OZ. SHOT OF WHISKEY, WHICH HE ENJOYED WITH HIS CUSTOMARY CIGAR. FOLLOWING THIS PERIOD OF CONVERSATION AND REST THE TWO COUPLES WALKED TO MAIN LODGE WHERE SUMPTUOUS LUNCHEON REPAST WAS PREPARED. TITO TOSSED OFF A GOOD MEAL WITH THREE GLASSES OF RED WINE. KELLERS DEPARTED KARADJORDJEVO AROUND 3:00 O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON.

3. KELLER, WHO HAS SEEN TITO SEVERAL TIMES DURING HIS TOUR HERE, SAID HE REMAINS IN AMAZING HEALTH FOR HIS YEARS. A MAN 70, KELLER SAID, WOULD BE LUCKY TO BE AS ALERT AND ROBUST. KELLER HAD NOTED THAT AT SECOND DINNER FOR MEXICAN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, DURING HIS VISIT HERE FEBRUARY 13-15, TITO LOOKED EXTREMELY TIRED AND HARDLY TRIED TO CONVERSE. DURING KARADJORDJEVO VISIT TITO ADMITTED HE HAD BEEN TIRED AND DOCTORS ORDERED HIM TO REST. HOWEVER, HE IS NOW ANXIOUS TO GET BACK TO WORK. DURING CONVERSATION WITH KELLER, TITO MENTIONED THAT HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO TRIPS SOON TO GERMANY, DENMARK, HUNGARY, AND AFRICA.

4. CONCERNING SUBSTANCE OF CONVERSATION, KELLER FOUND TITO IMPRESSIVELY WELL BRIEFED. HE WAS ABLE, FOR EXAMPLE, TO CITE SPECIFIC INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION PROJECTS WHICH SWISS HAVE UNDERTAKEN HERE, CREDITING SWISS WITH BEING AMONG THE FIRST TO COME TO YUGOSLAVIA'S AID AFTER THE BREAK WITH STALIN (SULZER COOPERATION IN RIJEKA SHIPYARDS). DISCUSSION ALSO COVERED MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, WITH TITO EXPRESSING HIS CUSTOMARY CONCERNS OVER ISRAELI POLICY, AND WORLD ENERGY PROBLEMS. HERE TITO GENERALLY PROFESSED CONFIDENCE THAT STRENGTH AND UNITY OF NONALIGNED MOVEMENT WOULD WARD OFF MAJOR SHOCKS TO MEMBER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING YUGOSLAVIA, WHICH IS ARRANGING ASSISTANCE TO ARAB COUNTRY INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS IN EXCHANGE FOR OIL. KELLER SAID CONVERSATION WAS LIBERALLY PEPPERED WITH JOKES AND STORIES WHICH TITO SEEMED TO ENJOY IMMENSELY. MRS. KELLER FOUND JOVANKA AN INTERESTING AND EASY CONVERSATIONALIST THROUGHOUT THE VISIT.

5. CONVERSATION BETWEEN KELLER AND TITO TOOK PLACE PRINCIPALLY IN GERMAN, WHICH KELLER SAID TITO LOVES TO SPEAK. ACCORDING TO KELLER, TITO IS PROUD OF HIS WIENER NEUSTADT AUSTRIAN ACCENT AND LIKES TO MENTION HIS PAST AUSTRIAN CONNECTIONS (IN MARCH 11 CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE MOSTLY IN GERMAN BUT WAS SPRINKLED WITH OCCASIONAL SERBO-CROATIAN PASSAGES (KELLER'S KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE IS FAIR) AS WELL

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AS WITH ENGLISH PASSAGES. KELLER SAID TITO CLEARLY UNDERSTANDS ENGLISH WELL. ENGLISH INTERPRETER PRESENT BUT LITTLE USED. TITO'S RUSSIAN, KELLER SAID, WAS FLAWLESS. MRS. KELLER FOUND MADAME BROZ' ENGLISH EXCELLENT.

6. KELLER SAYS TITO IS OBVIOUSLY BEING WONDERFULLY CARED FOR. WHATEVER EFFECTS HIS TIRING FEBRUARY SCHEDULE MAY HAVE HAD ON HIS HEALTH, THEY APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN FULLY CLEARED UP AS A RESULT OF

THREE-WEEK PERIOD OF ENFORCED REST.

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